

Demystifying Kashmiri Rasa Ideology: Rāmacandra– Gūṇacandra’s Theory of Aesthetics in Their *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*

Aleksandra Restifo^{1,2} 

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Abstract This paper presents a study of Rāmacandra–Gūṇacandra’s theory of aesthetics in light of the Kashmiri rasa ideology and demonstrates that the Jain authors offer a new and original conceptualization of aesthetic experience, in which the spectator remains cognitively active in the course of watching the drama. In their model, the relationship between rasa and pleasure is mediated by a cognitive error, and the feeling of pleasure does not coincide with the savoring of rasa but emerges after the savoring of rasa ceases. This paper argues that Rāmacandra and Gūṇacandra demystify the Kashmiri theory of aesthetics by identifying affinities between the lived world and the fictive world of drama and by rendering the regular means of knowledge, such as inference and memory, as instrumental for the experience of rasa. It further suggests that this new conceptualization, in which pleasure is contingent upon the dissolution of illusion, may have facilitated the development of playwrighting among Jain monks from the twelfth century on.

Keywords Sanskrit poetics · Aesthetics · Rasa · Jainism · *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* · Rāmacandra

Introduction

By the twelfth century, poetics had become an important field of scholarship among Indian pandits, who had developed sophisticated literary theories and philosophical arguments on how audience members comprehend aesthetic experiences. The

✉ Aleksandra Restifo
aleksandra.restifo@balliol.ox.ac.uk

¹ Yale University, 451 College Street, New Haven, CT 06511, USA

² Balliol College, University of Oxford, Oxford OX1 3BJ, UK

Nāṭyadarpaṇa (“Mirror of Drama”) of Rāmacandra (1093–1174) and Guṇacandra (twelfth century) reflects the influence of Kashmiri theoreticians, particularly Abhinavagupta, in that it, too, takes *rasa* as primarily the spectator’s experience and focuses on the production of *rasa* as the organizing principle of the dramatic and poetic work. That said, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra see themselves as continuing the lineage of Sanskrit scholars of dramaturgy, beginning with Bharata and Kohala,¹ and they envision the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* as a textbook for novice poets and playwrights. This practical, applied orientation sets the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* apart from the Kashmiri tradition of Sanskrit poetics and literary theory, which, as Bronner (2016) has recently argued, had its beginnings in the court of Jayāpīḍa (r. 776–807) chiefly in Udbhaṭa’s commentary on Bhāma-ha’s *Kāvyaśāstram*. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra were inspired by contemporary theatrical production to compose their *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*: “After seeing plays of great poets over and over again and composing our own plays, we wrote a text on dramaturgy with our own commentary.”² The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* abundantly employs Rāmacandra’s dramas for illustrations, in addition to plays no longer extant³ and well-known plays, such as the *Veṅṅsaṃhāra* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa and the *Ratnāvalī* of Harṣa.

The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* is organized in four chapters or “discussions” called *vivekas*. The first *viveka* focuses on the *nāṭaka* type of drama and discusses its narrative and structural characteristics, including typological states⁴ (*avasthā*) and plot stages (*sandhi*). The second *viveka* explains the other eleven types of dramas and thirteen variations of figurative speech (*vakrokti*) that are found in the *vīthī* and other types of dramas. The third *viveka* focuses on the four dramatic modes (*vṛtti*), nine *rasas*, emotions (*sthāyibhāva*, *vyabhicāribhāva*), physical reactions, and four registers of acting (*abhinaya*). In the fourth, final, *viveka*, a classification of dramatic characters and male and female protagonists is followed by a brief discussion of languages, dramatic modes of address, and other minor dramas (*anyāni rūpakāṇi*).

This paper focuses on Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra’s distinctive contributions to Sanskrit poetics: their new and original *rasa* theory, which categorically differs from the Kashmiri *rasa* ideology. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra do not envision aesthetic

¹ SV to 1.2: *kīyato ‘pi lakṣaṇavidhāv abhipretasya | tena kohalapraṇītalakṣmāṇaḥ sātakādayo na lakṣyante* | “And that much’ pertains to what is intended in this book. As such we will not define *sātaka* etc., whose characteristics have been explained by Kohala.”

² *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, preface, v. 2:
mahākavinibaddhāni dṛṣṭvā rūpāṇi bhūriśaḥ |
svayaṃ ca kṛtvā svopajñāṃ nāṭyalakṣma vivṛṇvahe ||

³ For a brief description of the lost plays, mentioned in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, see Gandhi (1999). For a discussion of some of these plays, see Granoff (2013).

⁴ Pollock’s phrasing, see Pollock (2016).

experience as a blissful form of awareness that is similar to the relishing of the Supreme, as Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta do.⁵ Nor do they embrace Ānandavardhana's theory about the production of rasa through the semantic function of suggestion (*dhvani*).⁶ Further, they question Bhaṭṭanāyaka's and Dhanañjaya-Dhanika's focus on pleasure as the sole objective of aesthetic experience. Finally, their goal in creating a new text on dramaturgy and poetics decisively differs from that of Hemacandra, whose treatise is an assemblage of others' theories and examples from Prakrit and Sanskrit literature.⁷ Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra acknowledge that there has already been much written on their subject and they have no intention to repeat everything others have said: "While there is a great deal that demands discussion, the authors will discuss only those things that they deem important."⁸

In this paper, I show how Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra's literary ingenuity, informed by their Jain background, resulted in a novel conceptualization of aesthetic experience. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra establish affinities between the lived world and the fictive world of theater and show that both worlds are characterized by equally *real* pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions. As such, rasa in drama and poetry is not the source of mere pleasure, but the means by which the actors and poets recreate the real-world experience and thereby entertain and excite the audience. The audience members in the course of watching the drama forget about the distinction between the actors and characters and identify with the characters' happy and sad emotional states. In doing so, they do not have their ego dissolved, as in Abhinavagupta's theory, but remain cognitively active, so much so that they can even direct their aesthetic emotion towards a specific person who they may know in their own lives. The experience of pleasure, which occurs upon the termination of the experience of rasa, is a distinct state that is contingent upon a series of cognitive errors. In the conclusion, I suggest that Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra's theories might have enjoyed greater resonance than scholars have noted so far.

The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention. Trivedi (1966) produced an independent intertextual study of the treatise where he outlined its similarities with other works on dramaturgy and poetics. Kulkarni (1983a, pp. 181–183) also offered a short discussion of the aesthetic theory in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* in light of the other works on dramaturgy. In his article on the contributions of Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṇūsāsana* to the legacy of Sanskrit poetics, Tubb (1998, pp. 58–59) only briefly mentioned the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* as one of the non-Brahmanical works that exemplified the unification of two originally divergent disciplines: *alaṅkāraśāstra* or poetics and *nāṭyaśāstra* or dramaturgy. Granoff (2009, 2013) pointed out the importance of Dhanañjaya's *Daśarūpaka* for Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra's work and Rāmacandra's preoccupation with originality in both his plays and the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*.

⁵ On Abhinavagupta's commentaries, see Gnoli (1968), Masson and Patwardhan (1969), Granoff (2016) and Pollock (2016, pp. 187–223); on Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory, see Gnoli (1968, pp. 43–48), Pollock (2010, 2016, pp. 144–154) and Shulman (2012, pp. 64–67).

⁶ On Ānandavardhana's *dhvani* theory, see McCrea (2008).

⁷ For an analysis of Hemacandra's "amalgamative" method in his *Kāvyaṇūsāsana*, see Tubb (1998).

⁸ SV to 1.2: *lakṣaṇāyabāhūlye 'pi hi yāvaty eva bhāge lakṣayitūh śraddhā tāvān eva lakṣyate |*

Recently, Pollock (2016) translated two sections from the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* and included a short introduction to the text in his *Rasa Reader*.

The rather meager amount of attention that the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* has elicited among South Asian scholars⁹ and in Western scholarship may be explained in part by the fact that the figure of Hemacandra (1088–1172) overshadowed the work of his disciples Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra. However, as Pollock (2016, pp. 239, 255) has indicated, Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s notion of a personalized aesthetic experience was disseminated widely enough to find a place far from their homeland of Gujarat in the works of south Indian theoreticians, such as Rudrabhaṭṭa’s *Rasakalikā* (twelfth century, Karnataka) and Vidyānātha’s *Pratāparudrīya* (c. 1320, Andhra-Pradesh). Trivedi (1966, p. 290) and Kulkarni (1983a, pp. 182–183) also identified Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s influence in the *Kāvyaṇṣakhaṇḍa* of Siddhicandraṇi (sixteenth century), who posited that aesthetic experience was pleasurable by nature, which led him to recognize the existence of only four rasas: the erotic, heroic, comic, and marvelous. Furthermore, I suggest that in Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja’s discussion of “new” views in his *Rasagaṅgādhara* (c. 1650, Telangana), we find some of the central principles of Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s theory, such as the experience of aesthetic pleasure through cognitive error, the possibility of painful aesthetic experience, the idea that rasa can be experienced in a dream,¹⁰ and the notion that illusion can generate real emotional and physical effects.

I argue that while Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra relied heavily on the terminology and concepts of the Kashmiri theoreticians, they repurposed them to redefine aesthetic experience into a demystified, personalized experience of drama as a form of reality. The element of pleasure in this model acquires a fundamentally different value and nature: it does not coincide with the savoring of rasa, a special type of awareness according to Abhinavagupta, but emerges after the savoring of rasa ceases. This is because drama and poetry are not, in actuality, the sources of mere pleasure, even if the audience is eventually led to believe so. Rather, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra argue that poets and actors construct a reality filled with vicissitudes and characterized by a diversity of painful and joyful events. These events elicit both pleasant and unpleasant rasas, and their alternating serves to entertain or excite (*rañj*) the audience. The spectators’ feeling of delight or astonishment (*camatkāra*) and the concurrent state of the highest bliss (*paramānandatā*) ensue from the realization that the genius of the actors and poets has beguiled them by crafting a dramatic reality that appeared indistinguishable from the lived world. In other words, *camatkāra* stems from the realization that the fictive world of drama appears identical with the lived world. The spectators mistakenly attribute their joy to all the rasas, despite the fact that not all of the rasas were pleasurable.

⁹ It received no commentary, besides the autocommentary, in the centuries to come.

¹⁰ See also Pollock’s translation (2009, p. 251, 2016, pp. 283–284) of Bhānūdatta Mīśra’s *Rasatarāṅginī*, where Bhānūdatta considers the rasa “occurring in a dream” as a type of supermundane (*alaukika*) rasa.

Rāmacandra's Penchant for Freedom

We know virtually nothing about Guṇacandra, besides the fact that he and Rāmacandra were Jain Śvetāmbara monks. There is more information about Rāmacandra, as he was a prolific writer, having authored eleven dramas, a text on Jain doctrine, and perhaps a number of *stotras* (hymns of praise).¹¹ Rāmacandra is mentioned in the *prabandha* literature as the one-eyed author of one hundred works,¹² who served in the court of the Caulukya kings Jayasiṃha Siddharāja (1094–1143) and Kumārapāla (1143–1173/1174) in Gujarat.¹³ The story of Rāmacandra relates that the seemingly anti-Jain king Ajayapāla (1173–1176), who succeeded Kumārapāla, ended up brutally murdering Rāmacandra by making him “sit on seats of red-hot iron.”¹⁴

Rāmacandra is often depicted as someone who was not afraid to go against authority or the crowd. For instance, in the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (no 145, p. 64), we find a slightly comical explanation for why he has only one eye. In praising Jayasiṃha Siddharāja, the court poet Śrīpāla pronounces a verse that everyone applauds, but Rāmacandra identifies two flaws in it. As a result, Jayasiṃha Siddharāja casts the evil eye on Rāmacandra, which makes him lose one eye.¹⁵ Other versions of the story about the eye-loss also point to Rāmacandra's propensity to rebel.¹⁶

Scholars describe Rāmacandra as someone who was deeply concerned with personal freedom¹⁷ and who was “fearless”¹⁸ and firm in his principles and beliefs. They base their assessment on verses from his dramas and hymns of praise attributed to him. For instance, in the *Nalavilāsanāṭaka*, “Nala's Adventures,” the

¹¹ See the discussion of Rāmacandra's authorship of *stotras* in Caturvijaya (1932, esp. pp. 48–49). Kulkarni (1983c, p. 22) and Dave (1982, p. ix), for instance, do not doubt the authenticity of Rāmacandra's authorship.

¹² See, for instance, *Kaumudīmitrāṇanda* (p. 2, *prabandhaśata*); see also Kulkarni (1983c, p. 22) and Dave (1982, p. ix).

¹³ Trivedi (1966, p. 209ff.) collects accounts about Rāmacandra from the *prabandha* literature, including the *Prabhāvakaarita* of Candraprabhasūri (1277 CE), the *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅgasūri (1310), the *Prabandhakośa* of Rājaśekharasūri (1348 CE), the *Kumārapālaprabandha* of Jinamaṇḍanagaṇi (1435 CE), and the *Upadeśataraiṅgī* of Ratnamandiraṅgaṇi (1460 CE).

¹⁴ Granoff (1989, 1994b) translates the story of Ābhada from the *Prabandhakośa* (Singhi Jain Series, Vol. 6, 1935, p. 97ff.). The same reference to the death of Rāmacandra is found in other hagiographies; for instance, see Tawney (1901, pp. 152–153). For references to the animosity between Ajayapāla and Rāmacandra in other Sanskrit hagiographies, see Deleu (1981, pp. 61–72). According to legend, after killing several Jain court poets, the newly crowned Śaiva king Ajayapāla engaged in the destruction of Jain temples and Jain faith as a whole in Gūrjaradeśa. It is difficult to establish whether these accounts of Ajayapāla's viciousness and anti-Jain agenda are true, because his rule lasted for only 3 years. Thereafter, during the reign of the Caulukya king Bhīma II (1178–1242) and the Vāghela vassal kings of Lāvāṇyaprasāda and Virādhavala, the Jains acquired the generous patronage of the ministers Vastupāla and Tejahpāla. On the controversy concerning King Ajayapāla, see Majumdar (1956, p. 129ff).

¹⁵ For a translation of the episode, see Tawney (1901, p. 94).

¹⁶ See Trivedi (1966, p. 212) for other versions of the story about Rāmacandra's eye-loss.

¹⁷ See Kulkarni (1983c, p. 25) and Trivedi (1966, p. 216).

¹⁸ See Kulkarni (1983c, p. 3).

actor asks the director if Rāmacandra composed this play himself or borrowed from others, and the director replies thus:

To this question the poet himself has responded thus: “When I come up with [new] words and meanings of words, people still say that I am merely following in the footsteps of others. This is the way people talk. When lilies bloom even on the moonless night, people say they have bloomed because of the moon.”¹⁹

Rāmacandra explicitly inserts his own voice in the conversation between the director and the actor in the prologue to the play in order to advocate for the originality of his poetry. In two of his dramas, the *Satyahariścandranāṭaka*, “Truthful Hariścandra” (1.5), and the *Nirbhayabhīmavyāyoga*, “Fearless Bhīma” (1.2), Rāmacandra praises independence (*svāntrya*) as one of the five showers of joy and creations of joy, respectively.

Most significantly, every extant drama of Rāmacandra features a final verse that glorifies independence, a state of self-reliance.²⁰ In the *Raghuvilāsanāṭaka*, “Rāma’s Adventures” (8.29), Rāmacandra declares that he has obtained glorious freedom (*svāntryalakṣmīm*). In the *Mallikāmakarandaprakaraṇa*, “Mallikā and Makaranda,” he plays on his own name, which incorporates the word *rāma*, “lovely,” and the word for the moon, *candra*, a standard simile for something that is white:

(*Joyfully*) By the grace of the Lord Jina, attaining supreme glorious fame that is as white as *the rays of the lovely moon/the fame of Rāmacandra* and as white as a jasmine petal, may you long enjoy independence.²¹

In his *Kaumudīmitrāṇandaprakaraṇa*, “Kaumudī and Mitrāṇanda,” the final verse reads in a similar manner, with the same play on Rāmacandra’s name and the moon. In this instance, the metaphor is extended: the rays of the moon are said to be cooling, relieving the torment of the heat of the sun. Rāmacandra’s works also help to relieve suffering:

United with your wife and friends, having achieved supreme and glorious fame that is as white as *the rays of the lovely moon/the deeds of Rāmacandra*, and a balm for suffering, may you long enjoy independence.²²

Similarly the final verses of Rāmacandra’s *Satyahariścandranāṭaka* (6.20), *Nalavilāsanāṭaka* (7.14), and *Nirbhayabhīmavyāyoga* (1.27), each end with the injunction “be independent” (*svatanthro bhava*), which he associates with the

¹⁹ *atrārthe tenaiva kavinā dattam uttaram | janaḥ prajñāprāptam padam atha padārtham ghaṭayataḥ paradhvādhvanyān naḥ kathayatu girāṃ varttanir iyam | amāvāsyaṃ apy avikalavikāśīni kumudāny ayaṃ lokaś candravatikaravikāśīni vadati || 1.7.*

²⁰ For a study of the relationship among independence, control over the senses, and pleasure in the context of the court, see Ali (2002).

²¹ *jinapatipadaprasādān nu rāmacandrāṃśukundalaviśadām | āśādyā yaśolakṣmīm parāṃ svatantrāṃ [sic] ciraṃ bhūyāḥ || 6.19.*

²² *upanamatrakalatraḥ santaptārāmacandrakaraviśadām | āśādyā yaśolakṣmīm parāṃ svatantrāś ciraṃ bhūyāḥ || 10.18.*

attainment of fame (*yaśas*). Fame, as he suggests, precedes and promises freedom from dependence on others. That Rāmacandra establishes a connection between fame and independence may reflect a culture in which a poet's fate was in the hands of his patron, often the king, and often with disastrous results, as the story of Rāmacandra's partial blinding suggests.

In this context it is particularly interesting that Rāmacandra does not mention a patron—Jayasiṃha Siddharāja or Kumārapāla—in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* or in any of his plays. Working in the shadow of his renowned teacher Hemacandra who secured a sound position at the Caulukya court, Rāmacandra does not appear to have been overly concerned with his station at court. One could argue that this monk-playwright carves out a freedom from both court politics and religious institutions, seeking protection in fame alone through his scholarly and poetic genius. As he states in the prologue to the *Raghuvilāsa*:

Truly, what wise person does not know Rāmacandra, who never tires of writing poetry, who is famous for the knowledge of the three Vedas, whose fame dances in the assembly that is the minds of scholars to the five drums in the guise of his five works?²³

That Rāmacandra omits mention of his political patrons but emphasizes his relationship with Hemacandra in each of his six extant plays and his text on poetics indicates that his loyalties were largely located in the domain of his monastic lineage.²⁴ His close ties with Hemacandra, however, did not inhibit the considerable degree of intellectual and poetic freedom Rāmacandra enjoyed. In addition to being one of the earliest Jain playwrights, Rāmacandra developed a theory of rasa that could hardly be more different from Abhinavagupta's conception of aesthetic experience presented, among other theories, in his religious teacher's *Kāvyaṃuśāsana*. With this image of Rāmacandra as an independent, and even rebellious, author who believes freedom to be the highest human value, we can proceed to outline some of the specific ways in which Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra laid out their original ideas in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*.

²³ *pañcaprabandhamiṣapañcamukhānakena vidvanmanaḥsadasī nṛtyati yasya kīrtiḥ | vidyātrayīcaṇam acumbītakāvyaṭandram kaś taṃ na veda kīla rāmacandram* || 1.3

In this verse, Rāmacandra implies that by the time of the composition of the *Raghuvilāsa*, he had written four works—the *Dravyālaṃkāra*, *Rāghavābhyudaya*, *Yādavābhyudaya*, and *Nalavilāsa* (p. 2). He also states in the *Satyahariścandra* (p. 2) that it is his first drama (*ādirūpakam*) and in the *Kaumudimitrāṇanda* (p. 3) that it is his second drama (*dviṭīyaṃ rūpakam*).

See also *Kaumudimitrāṇanda* (p. 2) where the director describes Rāmacandra as someone who “is tireless and never wavers from composing poetry and plays” (*aviṣṭīṃakāvyanirmāṇanistandra*).

²⁴ For instance, *Nalavilāsa*, p. 2:

DIRECTOR: The audience members have requested that I present without delay a play called “Nala's Adventures” composed by Rāmacandra, a disciple of the venerable Ācārya Hemacandra.

sūtradhārah: dattaḥ śrīmadācāryahemacandrasya śiṣyeṇa rāmacandreṇa viracitaṃ nalavilāsābhidhānam ādyaṃ rūpakam abhinetum ādeśaḥ |

The Jain Background of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra

As a Jain monk writing about poetics, Hemacandra comes immediately to mind as the predecessor to Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra. While Hemacandra's work on poetics is particularly valuable for its collection of theories and literary texts, he did not develop an independent philosophy of aesthetic experience.²⁵ The goal of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra appears to have been different: to highlight selective tenets of dramaturgy, correct inconsistencies in others' theories, and propound a new way of conceptualizing aesthetic experience.

Both Hemacandra and Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra begin their respective treatises with a benedictory verse (1.1) dedicated to Jain Speech (*jainī vāc*). Unlike their teacher,²⁶ however, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ the literary figure of double entendre to imbue the verse with two meanings. According to the first meaning, the verse extolls Jain Speech or Doctrine, and according to the second, it praises drama.

I worship Jain Speech that always brings about the fourfold fruit and holds the world in the right path by means of the twelve canonical texts.

I contemplate victorious speech that always brings about the fourfold fruit and holds the world in the right path by means of the twelve types of dramas.²⁷

In the first reading of the benedictory verse (SV to 1.1), “the right path” is characterized by virtues such as non-violence and generosity that bring about the goals of humankind. In the context of drama, “the right path” implies good conduct (*kr̥tya*) that is defined as adherence to justice and is taught by *nāṭakas* and other types of drama by means of the display of the results produced by the protagonists and antagonists' moral and immoral conduct (*navānayaphala*). Plays instill the notion of good conduct even in people whose minds are difficult to tame (*durdāntacetasa*). Furthermore, good conduct is desirable, because it leads to fame (*yaśasa*) and wealth (*sampat*).²⁸

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra expectedly declare the four human ends of dharma, love, wealth, and liberation to be the goals of drama.²⁹ They describe which events

²⁵ For his restatement of Abhinavagupta's theory, see AC to 2.1, p. 88. For the other sources of the *Kāvyaśāstra*, see Kulkarni (1983b).

²⁶ *Kāvyaśāstra* 1.1:

“I worship the Jain Speech that contains words that are natural and sweet, that denotes the highest truth, and that takes the form of all languages.” This last attribute is a reference to the supernatural quality of the speech of the Jina, which is heard by all of his listeners in their own language.

*akṛtrimasvādūpadām paramārthābhīdhāyiniṃ |
sarvabhāṣāpariṇatām jainīṃ vācam upāśmahe ||*

²⁷ *caturvargaphalām nityam jainīṃ vācam upāśmahe |
rūpair dvādaśabhir viśvam yayā nyāyā dhṛtam pathi ||*

It has been observed that Rāmacandra's benedictory verse was inspired by that of Dhanañjaya. Dhanañjaya compares the ten types of drama to the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, while Rāmacandra likens twelve dramas to the twelve canonical texts.

²⁸ SV to 1.1.

²⁹ See Masson and Patwardhan (1969, pp. 54–55) on Abhinavagupta's views on pleasure and instruction that attends to the four human ends; see also Pollock (2016, pp. 31–34) on “rasa and instruction.”

can be included in the *nāṭaka* type of drama by elaborating on Hemacandra's analysis, which states that all people desire to see plays about wealth (*artha*) and love (*kāma*) and thus there should be many such plays.³⁰ Wealth entails having a kingdom, and love presupposes playfulness. Moreover, a play with the prevailing themes of dharma and liberation should not result in the king giving away his entire kingdom to Brahmins or going into the forest, because the audience typically wants to see a play with a successful outcome in the here and now (*dr̥ṣṭasukhārthī hi bāhulyena loka iti*). Otherwise, the audience's pleasurable experience will be ruined (*asya pr̥tīr virasībhavet*).³¹

The same argument appears in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* with two important modifications. First, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra bring the definition of *nāṭaka* to the beginning of the text (1.5) and lay down these conditions for the composition of a play early on. This points to the significance of these rules and indicates the very practical goal of the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*: to provide clear and distinct instructions for playwrights. Second, they expand Hemacandra's assertions by drawing a sharp line between prescriptive or didactic literature and aesthetic dramas. They state that "doctrinal texts are not a play,"³² because doctrinal texts demonstrate the attainment of future results, while plays must produce immediate gratification of the protagonist in response to the audience's desire for an immediate fruit in this world (*sākṣāddr̥ṣṭaphalārthī*). Therefore, even in plays about dharma, the otherworldly achievements of the protagonist can be characterized by compassion, steadfastness, generosity, and justice, but not by the loss of the kingdom, abandoning of attachments, or carrying out a vow.³³ In plays about love, the protagonist enjoys the company of extraordinary noble women, sex, musical shows, freedom of movement, and pleasures in the garden. In plays where wealth is the central theme, the hero kills enemies, makes alliances, declares wars, and performs other actions pertaining to the kingdom. The human end of liberation is an auxiliary (*gauṇa*) goal by virtue of being an outcome of dharmic activity.³⁴

In his drama, the *Mallikāmakaranda*, Rāmacandra responds to potential criticism leveled at him for composing plays that are neither didactic nor overtly religious. In the prologue to the play, the actor expresses doubts about the ability of Rāmacandra, as a Jain monk, to compose a play filled with erotic, comic, or heroic rasas, since everyone knows that mendicants are only capable of preaching sermons on the Jain dharma that elicit the peaceful (*praśama*) rasa:

(*Disdainfully*) Sir, the mendicants are learned only in evoking the aesthetic emotion of peacefulness. Observing restraint in speech, they only use their eloquence for teaching the Jain dharma. They are completely incapable of

³⁰ *Viveka* to 8.3, p. 434.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² SV to 1.5: *bhāvidharmakāmārthaphalatvād āgamā na nāṭakam* | "The didactic texts are not dramas, since in them the results of the human ends of dharma, love, and wealth occur in the future."

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.* See Trivedi (1966, p. 275.2) where he compares Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra's idea of the human end of liberation to that of Hemacandra's.

composing dramas that exhibit the erotic, comic, and heroic aesthetic emotions.³⁵

The director, however, points out that it is a foolish thought:

Oh worthy friend, now you are saying things, which betray that you do not have the cleverness of [even] a villager!

Everyone in the world knows that peacefulness is the true nature of great monks, but they know the worlds, too. Although the gods are born in heaven, they roam about on earth as well.³⁶

Kulkarni (1983d, p. 5) rightly notes that the actor's criticism must reflect certain reservations of Rāmacandra's contemporaries about the monks' competence in evoking the rasas that they themselves should not experience. Rāmacandra refutes the notion that the experience of erotic and other aesthetic emotions results in a deviation from religious practice. This idea often appears in Jain didactic literature and is articulated by his contemporary scholar Malayagiri, who posits that watching drama impedes the monks' study and discipline (*svādhyāya*).³⁷ Notwithstanding this criticism, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra valorize poetic skill to be as aesthetically pleasing as a female breast:

Two things are embarrassing like pimples on the nose for experts in the experience of pleasure: the absence of breasts on a woman and the absence of poetic skill in the learned.³⁸

This illustration and the discussion above both indicate that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra assert their poetic independence from religious constraints.³⁹ The Jain

³⁵ *nataḥ: (sāvajñam) bhāva | praśamarasikavaiduṣyeṇa dharmadeśanāvidhānaikapragalbhavāco vācaṇyamāḥ śrīṅgārāhāsyavīrapramukharasamayānām anarhāḥ khalu nātyaprabandhānām | Mallikāmakaranda p. 2.*

³⁶ *sūtradhāraḥ: māṛṣa sāmpratam grāmīṇacātūrīvandhyam abhidadhāsi | śamas tattvaṃ munīndrāṇām jānate tu jaganty api | janmaiva divi devānām vihāro bhuvaneṣy api || Mallikāmakaranda 1.6.*

³⁷ *Vṛtti to Rāyapaseṇiyasutta, p. 245: ... gautamādīnām ca nātyavidheḥ svādhyāyādivighātakāritvāt | "... because watching various dramas impedes the religious study and discipline of Gautama and other monks."*

³⁸ *Nātyadarpaṇa, preface v. 10, p. 22: nāsikānte dvayaṃ svitraṃ dvayor vrīḍā rasajñayoh | kucābhāvaḥ kuraṅgākṣyāḥ kāvyābhāvo vipāścītaḥ ||*

³⁹ Monius (2004) observes a similar motive in the legend about the composition of the *Cīvakacintāmaṇi* in the Tamil-speaking region. Its author, the Jain monk Tiruttakkatēvar, was mocked by the poets of Maturai who claimed that Jains were incapable of composing a love poem and were only "skilled in the poetics expressive of renunciation" (p. 128). Flügel (2010, p. 373) argues that the existence of many love stories in Jain narrative culture can be explained by the "rhetorical strategy... to disguise religious meanings with a worldly plot ... to attract the attention of an audience." Contra these examples, Granoff (1994a, p. 184ff.) discusses a tale about King Kurucandra from the *Ākhyānakamaṇikośa* who desired to find the right religion for himself and asked his minister to invite ascetics who represented all types of religions. When they were all assembled in the court, the king requested them to finish a "cupping verse" (*samasyāpūrṭi*) that started with the description of a woman ("whether she wore earrings or not"), a common exercise in poetic competitions described in medieval Indian literature. While all the other ascetics betrayed their lust and passion in their verses, the Jain monk evinced true dispassion and equanimity, which convinced the king to choose Jainism.

monks—Hemacandra, Rāmacandra, and Guṇacandra—do not locate religious value in their dramatic works. Rather, they emphasize the works' this-worldly pleasurable aspect. Beyond the benedictory verse, virtually nothing in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* overtly speaks of the religious affinities of its two authors. However, there are several ways in which the knowledge of their Jain background helps us better understand their text.

First is their propensity to integrate multiple possibilities and positions at once. This is the case in their discussion of the location of rasa and the source of rasa. They posit that the statement “there is no rasa in an actor” is incorrect, because it would be an absolute (*ekāntaḥ*) and thus flawed assertion.⁴⁰ Rather, rasa may be located in the actor, the character, the listener, the reader, or the spectator of the play.⁴¹ The source of rasa, they argue, can be not only poetry and drama, but also an illusion such as a dream, which serves to refute Abhinavagupta's position that rasa exists exclusively in drama. As Jains normally do, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ the philosophical principle of pluralism (*anekāntavāda*) when they find it suitable and do not employ it when they prefer to take a more categorical position on an issue.

The ubiquity of rasa further points to the affinities among drama, illusion, and reality: all of them make a person experience *real* pleasant and unpleasant emotions that produce physical, material effects, such as *anubhāvas* (e.g., stupor, swoon, etc.) in a spectator or a dreaming person. Jain philosophy is known for its predilection for realism, and it imagines the world to be comprised of *jīva* and *ajīva*, soul and matter, where soul is eternal and matter is without beginning. Through worldly activity, the soul becomes bound by material karmic particles that can be removed by means of mental and physical austerities. Within this philosophical framework, aesthetic experience cannot anticipate the experience of pure consciousness as it does in Abhinavagupta's work. Instead, the spectator experiences the fictive world of drama as identical to the lived world, reaffirming the connection between dramatic illusion and reality as it is ordinarily experienced. Both the fictive world of the drama and ordinarily perceived reality are misleading. Since the karma that results in wrong perceptions of the soul is something that is real, a cognitive shift alone, such as one might experience from a drama, cannot remove it. It is only the Jain path of monasticism that can procure freedom from karma and hence from delusion.

Finally, Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra's emphasis on real distress produced by unpleasurable rasas is significant for the Jain literary tradition, in which narratives were thought to be capable of bringing about substantial changes in their audience. Flügel (2010), Phyllis Granoff (1994c, 1995) and John Cort (1992), among others, have pointed to the Jains' employment of narrative techniques as particularly powerful tools for proselytizing. Many of the stories that Jains told rely on shock

⁴⁰ SV to 3.7, p. 142: *na ca naṭasya raso na bhavatīty ekāntaḥ* |

Pollock's translation (2016, p. 243) as “since there is no hard and fast rule that an actor cannot feel rasa” misses the reference to the Jain teaching of *anekāntavāda*.

⁴¹ SV to 3.7, p. 142: *rasaś ca mukhyalokagaṭaḥ prekṣakagaṭaḥ kāvyasya śrotranusandhāyakadvayagato veti* | Pollock (2016, 399, note 17) notes that the word *anusandhāyaka* is unclear but could denote “composer,” i. e. “author.”

and negative emotions. Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s insistence upon the authenticity of cognitive effects generated by aesthetic emotions—comforting or unsettling—works to further validate narrative strategies as effective tools for purposes of religious indoctrination and popularization.

Pleasure and Entertainment in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*

The relationship between moral instruction and aesthetic pleasure is often foregrounded in Sanskrit texts on poetics. Bhaṭṭanāyaka (c. 900) and his student Dhanañjaya (c. 975) rendered aesthetic pleasure as the primary goal of drama. Bhaṭṭanāyaka famously ridicules fools who regard only the knowledge of the four human ends (*vyutpattimātra*)—dharma, love, wealth, and liberation—to be the fruit of drama (*phala*).⁴² Dhañika (Dhanañjaya’s commentator and younger brother) also posits that the fruit (*phala*) of the ten types of plays is the savoring of rasa that takes the form of the highest bliss (*paramānandarūpo rasāsvādo*).⁴³ Abhinavagupta asserts that pleasure and instruction are not distinct categories, but two intertwined drives of drama that converge in propriety (*aucitya*).⁴⁴ The distinction that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra highlight between the genres of didactic literature or *āgamas* and drama appears to be in opposition to Bhaṭṭa Toṭa’s statement that “rasa consists of pleasure, and rasa alone is drama, and drama alone is the Veda.”⁴⁵ For Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, a separation of religious discourse from entertaining literature and performance is crucial.

In his *Kāvyaṇuśāsana*, Hemacandra (1.3), following Mammaṭa’s *Kāvyaṇprakāśa* (1.2) (c. 1100), reiterates the principle of the tripartite division of literature into the didactic, historical, and poetic. In conformity with the theories of Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta, Hemacandra (AC to 1.3) states that joy (*ānanda*), one of the three primary goals of *kāvya*, ensues from the relishing of rasa (*rasāsvādajanmā*), a pleasure (*prīti*) akin to the relishing of the Supreme (*brahmāsvādasadṛśī*).⁴⁶ Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra also identify the savoring of aesthetic emotions to be the key component of watching the drama, but it is not analogous to the state of the highest bliss (*paramānandarūpatā*).⁴⁷ Rather, rasa is responsible for the

⁴² *Daśarūpaka* 1.6.

⁴³ *Avaloka* to 1.6.

⁴⁴ Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 55) quote Abhinavagupta: “Nor are pleasure and instruction really different things, for they both have the same object;” in *Locana* p. 336: *na caite prītiṅvyutpattī bhinnarūpe eva dvayor ekaviśayatvāt* | Pollock (2016, pp. 31–34, 181ff.) shows that with Abhinavagupta’s commentaries on Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvanyāloka* and particularly on Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the focus on instruction (*vyutpattī*) that enables the attainment of the four human ends returns.

⁴⁵ Tr. by Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 55); *Locana* p. 336: *prītyātmā ca rasas tad eva nāṭyam eva veda ity asmadupādhyāyāḥ* |

⁴⁶ The other two goals of *kāvya* are fame for the poet (*yaśase*) and counsel like that of a lover (*kāntātulyatayopadeśāya*) (1.3). Hemacandra criticizes Mammaṭa and others for including wealth (*artha*), etc. into the list of poetic goals, as they can be acquired from other sources and may not be acquired from poetry (AC to 1.3).

⁴⁷ SV to 3.7, p. 141.

entertainment or excitement (*rañjana*) that drama must provide. The feeling of the highest bliss ensues only *after* the relishing of painful and pleasurable rasas ends. In repeating Dhanañjaya almost verbatim, they posit that a play should possess all of the nine aesthetic emotions, whereby one must be dominant, others auxiliary, and the marvelous (*adbhuta*) at the very end.⁴⁸

The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* further suggests that dramas, particularly *nāṭakas*, *prakaraṇas*, *nāṭikās*, and *prakaraṇīs* (SV to 1.3), provide valuable instruction and examples to emulate in order to guide the audience onto the path towards renown and wellbeing. They do so by means of instructive stories about great men (*mahāpuruṣopadeśārha-carita*)⁴⁹ that guide even fools in the right direction.⁵⁰ The *nāṭaka* type of drama, as Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra state, teaches the celebrated principle, “Behave like Rāma, not like Rāvaṇa,”⁵¹ and therefore must have a human being for the main character; gods are known to be whimsical, to manifest desired objects by mere thought, and to act as they wish.⁵² Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra hold, however, that dramas should not focus on instruction at the expense of entertainment.

It is important to clarify the terminology that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ to denote varieties of pleasure and entertainment. An alternation of pleasurable (*sukhāthmaka*) and unpleasurable (*duḥkhāthmaka*) rasas generates excitement and entertainment (*rañjana*).⁵³ After the experience of rasa ceases, the spectator feels delight (*camatkāra*), which then leads to the sensation of the highest bliss (*paramānanda*). This classification of pleasurable states enables one to avoid the assumption—that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra wish to avoid—that all rasas produce pleasure. In their view, the combination of sad and happy events serves to *entertain* the audience, but it does not grant pure pleasure.

The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, therefore, holds that a story must be entertaining (*rañjaka*) and the poet may disregard real events (*sat*) and include fictional elements (*asat*) for the sake of entertainment (*rañjanārtham*).⁵⁴ Moreover, plays (*nāṭakas*) must relate events that happened in the past, but if a poet slightly embellishes or changes something for the purpose of entertainment, it is not a flaw.⁵⁵ As Granoff (2009,

⁴⁸ SV to 1.15: *nāṭakam hi sarvarasaṃ kevalam eko 'ngī tad apare gauṇāḥ | adbhuta eva raso 'nte nirvahaṇe yatra* | Cf. *Daśarūpaka* 3.33cd-34ab, where Dhanañjaya adds that the dominant rasa must be either the erotic or the heroic.

⁴⁹ See SV to 1.3–1.4: Plays such as *nāṭaka* and *prakaraṇa* instruct people by means of stories of great men (SV to 1.4). Plays such as *nāṭikā* and *prakaraṇī* also revolve around the stories of great men and thus offer moral instruction (*upadeśa*), in contrast to the remaining eight types of dramas that do not relate edifying stories (*anupadeśārha-caritaprāyatvena*) (SV to 1.4).

⁵⁰ SV to 2.4: *durmedhasāṃ hi nyāyē vartmani vṛtyarthaṃ kavayo 'bhineyaprabandhān grathanantīti |*

⁵¹ SV to 1.5. See also *Kāvya-prakāśa* 1.2 and *Kāvya-nūśāna* 1.3.

⁵² For a discussion of these verses and comparison of them with Abhinavagupta's, see Trivedi (1966, p. 260); Leclère (2013, pp. 119–121).

⁵³ The *bhāṇa* type of drama is said to mainly entertain the audience (*rañjanātmaka*) by virtue of containing episodes with jesters, courtesans, etc.; see 2.16 and SV to 2.16.

⁵⁴ SV to 1.5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*: *alpaṃ kim api rañjakam kalpitaṃ api na doṣāyēti* | See also McCrea (2011) where he shows that Ānandavardhana encourages playwrights to deviate from the shastric rules in order to enhance the dominant rasa. See Leclère (2013) for a discussion of how and for what purposes medieval playwrights

p. 3) observes, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra “are clear when they talk about drama and poetry that an author could and at times was even required to be free and creative with his material.” In giving the etymology of the word *nāṭaka*, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra posit that it comes from the causative verb *nāṭ* that means “making the audience’s hearts dance from a variety of entertainments” (*rañjanāpraveśena*).⁵⁶ The opposite of *rañjaka*, “entertaining,” is *nīrasa*, “boring,” and the author should not create boring scenes.⁵⁷ In the definition of the act (*aṅka*),⁵⁸ the authors of the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* state that it must consist of compelling events such as the protagonist’s actions and pleasant experiences. If the act does not feature the hero’s actions, the audience will not learn anything; if the hero has no pleasant experiences (*sambhoga*), the audience will be frustrated and think: “What was the point of all this immense trouble (*mahākṛeśa*)?”⁵⁹

Instruction is identified as one of the two definitive characteristics of drama, but we are repeatedly told that entertainment is the lifeblood of the drama. When entertaining, even activities which are considered repulsive, such as sleeping, may be acted out on the stage. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra give two examples of sleeping—that of Sītā in the *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhūti and that of Damayantī in Rāmacandra’s own *Nalavilāsa*—and explain that these examples do not constitute a flaw (*na duṣṭam*) on account of the entertainment they produce (*rañjakatvāt*) and their narrative relevance (*prastutopayogitvāt*).⁶⁰ Entertainment, again, is singled out as the main criterion in the discussion about the ways of constructing a narrative (*vṛtta*). It must contain recurring lofty and entertaining events (*udātā rañjakā bhāvāḥ sthāpanīyāḥ puraḥ puraḥ*) for the enhancement of rasa.⁶¹ Even if the entertaining events are not lofty or not worthy of the characters of the highest nature (*uttamaprakṛtiyogyāḥ*), they should still be included for the sake of rasa.⁶²

Although the experience of rasa does not directly evoke pleasure, for Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, rasa is, indeed, at the heart of the dramatic work. In his *Satyahariścandra* (1.3) and *Raghuvilāsa* (1.4), Rāmacandra constructs a dialogue, in which the director envisions the audience’s suspicion about the aesthetic dimension of the play:

(*In the air*) What are you saying? “As for us, we certainly possess these charming virtues, but not every performance makes the most beautiful

Footnote 55 continued

broke the rules of composing plays about the past events and figures and staged dramas depicting the contemporaneous affairs.

⁵⁶ SV to 1.5: *nāṭakam iti nāṭayati vicitraṃ rañjanāpraveśena sabhyānām hṛdayaṃ nartayatīti nāṭakam |*

⁵⁷ SV to 1.11.

⁵⁸ SV to 1.19.

⁵⁹ Ibid.: *dṛśyārtha iti dṛśyā rañjakatvād darśanīyārthā nāyakacaritopabhogā yatra | caritāsākṣātkāre hi prekṣakāṅgām avyutpattiḥ | sambhogāsākṣātkāre ca kim anena mahākṛeśeneti vairasyaṃ syāt |*

⁶⁰ SV to 1.11.

⁶¹ *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* 1.17.

⁶² SV to 1.17: *anudātā api ye rañjakā bhāvās te sakalasyāpi prabandhasya rasārohārthaṃ puraḥ puro niveśanīyā iti |*

aesthetic emotions flow into a play.” (*Laughing*) Are you asking about aesthetic emotions of this play? Well,

What need I say about instruction, which is the first thing to be mentioned when one talks about the qualities of a drama? And there are definitely new expressions here and there, fragrant like budding sprouts.

But those who know the secrets of literature declare with great fanfare that it is rasa, the lifeblood of the ten types of dramas, that is supreme in Rāmacandra’s verses.⁶³

In allocating the dominant position to rasa, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra operate within the consensus of theoreticians, beginning with Ānandavardhana (c. 875) in whose *Dhvanyāloka* “rasa becomes the central phenomenon of literariness for poetics as well as dramatic forms.”⁶⁴ In other words, literature begins to revolve around the production of rasa. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra incorporate a kind of preface of twelve verses in their treatise. The preface delineates who has the right to compose drama and why they are entitled to do so. It states that making stories (*kathās*) and other texts charming (*mṛdu*) through literary figures (*alaṅkāras*) is easy, while imbuing a play (*nāṭya*) with rasa is difficult.⁶⁵ Among the requirements for the poet we find the knowledge of singing, music, dance, worldly ways (*lokasthiti*), and rules of propriety for all from a servant to a king.⁶⁶ Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra also place poetry above all other types of knowledge in the preface, proclaiming it the very life-breath of learning, and shaming those learned people who do not possess a poetic talent (*akavitva*) and who plagiarize by stealing others’ poetry.⁶⁷

The entertaining nature of drama does not imply the absence of painful experience. On the contrary, audience members are more affected by pleasurable rasas when they have experienced unpleasurable rasas, just as a sweet drink appears even sweeter after tasting something bitter.⁶⁸ Unpleasurable rasas, therefore, intensify the entertaining aspect (*rañjaka*) of pleasurable rasas, but it is important not to undermine the suffering that these *duḥkhātma* rasas produce, as Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra make clear:

Moreover, how can the sensitive audience savor pleasure while seeing the abduction of Sītā, Draupadī being pulled by her hair and disrobed,

⁶³ *kim ādiśata yathoditaguṇagrāmābhīrāmā eva vāyam āsmahe | kiṃtu paramarasaniṣyaṃdaduṃdaraḥ ko 'pi prabandhe 'bhinaya iti | (vihasya) sarasatāyām kim ucyate prabandhasya | yataḥ vyutpattir mukham eva nāṭakaguṇanyāse tu kiṃ varṇyate saurabhyaprasavā navā bhānitir apy asty eva kācīt kvacit | yaṃ prāṇān daśarūpakasya sakarotkṣepaṃ samācakṣate sāhityopaniṣadvidāḥ sa tu raso rāmasya vācām param || Satyaharīścandra 1.3.*

⁶⁴ Pollock (2016, p. 87).

⁶⁵ *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, preface, v. 3, p. 21.

⁶⁶ *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, preface, vv. 4, 8, p. 21.

⁶⁷ *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, preface, vv. 9-11, p. 22.

⁶⁸ SV to 3.7, p. 141: *pānakamādhuryam iva ca tīkṣṇāsvādena duḥkhāsvādena sutarām sukhāni svadante iti |*

Hariścandra's servitude to a *cāṅḍāla*, [his son] Rohitāśva's death, Lakṣmaṇa being wounded by a lance, and Mālatī being prepared for killing?⁶⁹

The painful rasas—pitiful, violent, gruesome, and terrible—bring about some ineffable distress in spectators and terrify them.⁷⁰ And if these scenes happen to evoke pleasure in the audience, it only indicates that the acting is bad.⁷¹ Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra anticipate the valid question of why people are not put off by the theater if they experience disturbing emotions such as fear or grief in the course of watching the drama. In addressing this question, Bhaṭṭanāyaka, for instance, states that rasas cannot be real emotions, because aesthetic experience is always pleasurable, even when painful rasas are in question.⁷² Both Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta envision emotions of the lived world and aesthetic emotions as completely different experiences, in part to explain why painful aesthetic emotions do not cause suffering to the spectator. While Ānandavardhana famously posits that Vālmīki's grief over the separation of the *krauca* birds turned into a verse,⁷³ Abhinavagupta refutes the notion that the poet was actually suffering from grief. For Abhinavagupta, one can only write of others' pain that one experiences as an aestheticized emotion.⁷⁴ Abhinavagupta describes what may appear as unpleasant emotions of the spectator thus:

In our view, the consciousness itself is savored as pure bliss. How can one even doubt that there might be pain? The latent dispositions of passion, grief, and the like serve only to give variation.⁷⁵

The spectator's seemingly negative emotions such as grief or disgust are simply his latent dispositions (*vāsanās*), which do not interfere with the highest pleasure of savoring his or her own consciousness. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra solve the question of negative experience in the theater differently, as will be discussed below.

⁶⁹ SV to 3.7, p. 141: *api ca sītāyā haraṇam draupadyāḥ kacāmbarākaraṇam hariścandrasya cāṅḍāladāsyam rohitāśvasya maraṇam lakṣmaṇasya śaktibhedanam mālatyā vyāpādanārambhaṇam ityādyabhiniyamānam paśyatām sahrdayānām ko nāma sukhāsvadaḥ |*

⁷⁰ Ibid.: *kāvyaḥ bhinayopanītavibhāvopacito 'pi bhayānako bībhatsaḥ karuno raudri vā rasāsvādatatām anākheyām kām api kleśadaśām upanayati | bhayānakādibhir udvijate samājah |* The pleasurable rasas are the erotic, heroic, comic, marvelous, and peaceful.

⁷¹ SV to 3.7, p. 142: *yadi cānukaraṇo sukhātmānaḥ syur na samyag anukaraṇam syāt |*

⁷² See Pollock (2010, p. 148).

⁷³ *Dhvanyāloka* p. 85: *kraucadvandvaviyogothaḥ śokaḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ |*

⁷⁴ *Locana* pp. 85–86.

⁷⁵ *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 286: *asmanmate samvedanam evānandaghanam āsvādyate | tatra ka duḥkhaśaṅkā | kevalam tasyaiva citratākaraṇe ratiśokādivāsanāvypārah |*

Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s Theory of Aesthetics

As is well known, Abhinavagupta reworked the ideas of his precursors, particularly those of Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Ānandavardhana, into the foundational blocks of his own celebrated theory. Abhinavagupta’s theory also became a major source of reference for the works that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra used, such as the *Kāvyaṣaṅkṣa* of Mammaṭa (c. 1025) and the *Kāvyaśūśrūṣā* of Hemacandra (twelfth century). Both texts largely restate Abhinavagupta’s theory of rasa production and aesthetic experience. Abhinavagupta confined rasa to drama, suggesting that poetry is an imitation of drama, and located the savoring of rasa in the spectator. He defined the savoring of rasa in a variety of ways: aesthetic enjoyment (*bhoga*), delight (*camatkāra*), and, ultimately, mental repose (*viśrānti*) or the experience of one’s pure consciousness, free from aberration (*sañkaṭa*) and illusion (*moha*).⁷⁶

Aesthetic experience begins after understanding the meaning of the sentence; this is when the self goes into the state of cognitive abstraction and savors its own unobscured awareness as *camatkāra*.⁷⁷ For both Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta, the savoring of rasa is brought about (*bhāvyaṁāna*) by aesthetic elements such as *vibhāvas* and *anubhāvas* and is characterized by the process of universalization (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*).⁷⁸ The spectator identifies with the emotional states of the character, while transcending the particularities of the situation, including notions of pain, pleasure, place, or reason. In a staged drama, the audience perceives (*pratīti*) Rāma’s love for Sītā through the characters (*āmbanavibhāvas*, “foundational factors”) and their physical reactions (*anubhāvas*). But the erotic rasa is relished as the pure emotion itself, devoid of the particularity of Sītā. This sort of aesthetic pleasure is akin to that of the highest bliss, in which the Supreme is experienced (*brahmāsvāda*). For Abhinavagupta, the nature of aesthetic experience has nothing in common with quotidian situations in people’s lives:⁷⁹

What aesthetic relish (*rasatā*) would there be in the mere inference of emotional states that are found in the everyday world? The relishing of rasa is a supernormal (*alaukika*) delight. It consists in savoring the *vibhāvas*, etc., which are found in poetry, and it must not be degraded to the level of memory and inference, or the like.⁸⁰

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra borrow this terminology to express a different meaning.⁸¹ While for Abhinavagupta the savoring of rasa consists in supermundane delight and causes “the dissolution of the spectator’s personality,” the Jain

⁷⁶ See Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 77).

⁷⁷ *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 273: *sa cāvighnā saṁvic camatkārah |*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* See Pollock (2010) and Granoff (2016, pp. 283–284), n. 6.

⁷⁹ Bhaṭṭanāyaka compared this feeling with Yogis’ elevated state; see Shulman (2012, pp. 65, 294, n. 48); see also Gnoli (1968, p. 48).

⁸⁰ *Tr.* by Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 191). *Locana* p. 155: *lokagatacittavṛtṭyanumānamātram iti kā rasatā alaukīcamatkārātmā rasāsvādah.*

⁸¹ Cf. SV 3.7: *yat punar ebhir api camatkāro dr̥ṣyate, sa rasāsvādavirame sati yathāvasthitavastupradarśakena kavinaṭaśaktikauśalena.*

theoreticians envision the savoring of pleasurable and unpleasurable rasas as a life-like diverse experience of joy and pain that “involves continuous cognitive activity in the course of watching the drama.”⁸² They emerge as early psychologists who postulate that people do not always know the true causes of their emotional states and assume incorrect conclusions: the spectators *post factum* misattribute the feeling of the highest bliss (*paramānanda*) to the effects of rasas. If for Abhinavagupta aesthetic pleasure implies the removal of delusion, which unveils pure consciousness, for Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra the final pleasure occurs when one mode of deception is exposed and another commences. These are the key passages for understanding Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s aesthetic theory:

That they (the four unpleasurable rasas) elicit the feeling of *camatkāra* is what happens *after* the savoring of rasa has ended, and is the result of the genius of the poet or the skill of the actor in showing things as they really are. Indeed, those who take pride in courage are astounded by the deft attack of a hero, even if it leads to someone’s decapitation. Wise people, having been deceived by the feeling of *camatkāra* produced by the talent of a poet or an actor, which causes the whole body to be suffused with pleasure, experience the state of the highest bliss even in unpleasurable rasas such as pitiful, etc.⁸³

And on hearing the word “Rāma” and [grasping] its conventional meaning, while also becoming captivated by the beautiful music, the spectator identifies actors with Rāma and the other characters, who, distinguished though they are from those characters by difference in time, space, and nature, appear to be the characters by concealing that distinction through the fourfold process of acting. As a consequence, the spectator becomes fully absorbed in all Rāma’s and the other characters’ states, happy or sad.⁸⁴

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ the notions of *camatkāra* and *paramānanda*, firmly established in Sanskrit poetics by the twelfth century, and present them in a novel way. The audience comes to enjoy drama or poetry as a result of being in a state of double deception. Firstly, by presenting things realistically, brilliant acting or excellent poetry leads the audience members to forget that drama portrays a fictional world and to identify actors with the characters. Further, the viewers themselves become so absorbed in the dramatic action that they identify with the characters’ states and experience pleasant and unpleasant rasas along with them. After the savoring of the rasa ends, they realize that they have been beguiled by the genius of actors and poets and attain the state of *camatkāra*. Secondly, while

⁸² David Shulman, electronic correspondence from 02/24/2018.

⁸³ Somewhat modified translation of Pollock (2016, pp. 241–242). SV to 3.7, p. 141: *yat punar ebhir api camatkāro dr̥śyate sa rasāsvādivirāme sati yathāvasthītavastupradarśakena kavinaṭaśaktikaūśalena | vimanyate hi śiraśchedakāriṇāpi prahārakuśalena vairiṇā śauṇḍīramāninaḥ | anenaiva ca sarvāṅgāhlādakena kavinaṭaśaktijanmanā camatkāreṇa vipralabdḥāḥ paramānandarūpatām duḥkhātmakeṣv api karuṇādiṣu sumedhasaḥ pratijānate |*

⁸⁴ Somewhat modified translation of Pollock (2016, p. 246). SV to 3.50ab: *prekṣako ‘pi rāmādiśabdasainketasravanād atihṛdyasaṅgītakāhītavaivaśyāc ca svarūpadeśakālabhedenātābhūteṣv apy abhineyacatuṣṭayācchādanāt tathābhūteṣv iva naṭeṣu rāmādīn adhyavasyati | ata eva tāsu tāsu sukhaduḥkharūpāsu rāmādyavasthāsu tanmayībhavati |*

captivated by this pleasurable sensation of *camatkāra*, the viewers feel the highest joy and misconstrue its true cause by locating it in the rasas themselves. In this way, the audience is first deluded by poetry and acting that present the fictional world with such realism, and then they are led to misidentify the source of their intense pleasure. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra support their theory, which involves a series of cognitive errors, by reminding the reader that the erotic and other rasas can indeed be produced by an illusion (*bhrānti*), such as a dream.⁸⁵

For Abhinavagupta, as we have seen, the savoring of rasa, as a form of awareness, belongs only to the spectator. The authors of the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* locate rasa in the character, the actor, the spectator of drama, and the listener or reader of poetry, and classify the perception of rasa into direct and indirect and as pertaining to oneself and to another (*svaparayoḥ pratyakṣaparokṣābhyām*).⁸⁶ Because the spectator cannot read the character's mind (*cetodharmāṇām atīndriyatvāt*),⁸⁷ he or she perceives rasa in the character or actor only indirectly (*parokṣa*), through the actor's physical reactions (*anubhāvas*). Meanwhile, the actor may or may not experience rasa himself; if he does, his physical reactions are the effects of his rasas (*rasakāryāḥ*); alternatively, they merely generate rasa in the audience (*prekṣakagatarasāṇām kāraṇam*).⁸⁸

Only the actual characters are capable of experiencing rasa in a clear form (*spaṣṭarūpāḥ*), since the foundational factors are real for them (*vibhāvānām paramārthasattvāt*), and thus both their foundational factors and physical reactions, produced by rasa, also appear in a clear, unobscured form. Spectators, alternatively, perceive rasa in an unclear form (*dhyāmalenaiva rūpeṇa*), because foundational factors (*āmbanavibhāvas*) such as Sītā, as wife, or Rāma, as husband, do not exist for them in reality (*vibhāvānām aparamārthasatām eva*).⁸⁹ While rasa in the spectator appears in the unclear form, it also manifests as a stable emotion that is an intensified mental state.⁹⁰ Upon understanding the meaning of the drama or poem, spectators savor rasa as their own internal state such as joy.⁹¹ Enjoying rasa is not like eating sweetmeats, that is to say, savoring something external to oneself. It is an entirely internal experience; one's own feelings of fear or grief are transformed into the fearful or pitiful rasa by means of the appropriate *vibhāvas* in the drama.⁹²

This ontological model raises a question: How can the spectator's rasa have an unclear and indistinct form (*dhyāmala*), if it is ultimately his or her internal feeling such as joy or fear? Prabhācandra's *Prameyakalamārtaṇḍa*, "The Sun of the Lotus of the Objects of True Knowledge" (eleventh century), a treatise on Jain logic, states that *sukha* and other internal states are perceived directly (*pratyakṣa*),⁹³

⁸⁵ SV to 3.49, p. 167.

⁸⁶ SV to 3.7, p. 143.

⁸⁷ SV to 3.7, p. 142.

⁸⁸ Ibid. .

⁸⁹ SV to 3.7, p. 143.

⁹⁰ Ibid.: *śrītoṅkarṣo hi cetovṛttirūpaḥ sthāyī bhāvo rasaḥ |*

⁹¹ Ibid.: *pratipattāś cātmasthaṃ sukham iva rasam āsvādayanti |*

⁹² SV to 3.7, p. 144.

⁹³ *Prameyakalamārtaṇḍa* p. 600: *sukhādisvarūpasamvedanavat.*

without the intervention of another means of knowledge or an obstacle.⁹⁴ Unlike most non-Jain philosophers,⁹⁵ Jains do not believe that the eye makes contact with an object of perception.⁹⁶ As such, *pratyakṣa* or direct perception is simply understood as clear knowledge, *viśada* or *spaṣṭa*.⁹⁷ Indirect knowledge, which is mediated through invariable concomitance (*vyāptijñāna*), is different from *pratyakṣa* in that it is not clear (*aspaṣṭatvenāpratyakṣam*).⁹⁸ Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s term for a *rasa* that is not clear (*spaṣṭa*) and has the generalized foundational factor as its object (*sāmānyastrīviśayaḥ*) is *dhyāmala*.⁹⁹ Therefore, the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph can be rephrased: How do Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra resolve the discrepancy in which the spectator’s *rasa* is not clear (*spaṣṭa*) or within the purview of direct perception (*pratyakṣa*), while it is ultimately an internal feeling such as joy or fear? The answer is that they do so by rendering the spectator’s *rasa* supernormal or *lokottara*.¹⁰⁰

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra must have borrowed the term and concept *lokottara* from Abhinavagupta, who glosses tasting (*rasanā*) as a type of awareness (*bodharūpaiva*), different from other normal types of awareness (*kiṃtu bodhāntarebhyo laukikebhyo vilakṣaṇaiva*), and *rasa* as a *lokottara* object of that experience.¹⁰¹ While Abhinavagupta makes *carvaṇā* or *rasanā* a type of *alaukika* or supernormal knowledge, distinct from direct perception, or *pratyakṣa*, memory, or *smṛti*, and inference, or *anumāna*, he admits that in the initial stages *rasa* is contingent upon inference, even if it is a different kind of inference.¹⁰² Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, too, suggest that the spectator must first infer the correct emotion from the physical reactions of the actors (which serve as the inferential mark or *liṅga*) and the foundational factors they enact. Additionally, they accept the possibility of a normal epistemological means for the comprehension of *rasa* such as memory, a proposition that I will explain below.

⁹⁴ *Prameyakamalamārtaṇḍa*, p. 600: *pramāṇāntaravyavadhānāvvyavadhānasadbhāvena vaiśadyetarasambhavāt* |

⁹⁵ See Granoff (1978, pp. 45–47) for Śrī Harṣa’s refutation of the Mīmāṃsaka definition of perception.

⁹⁶ *Prameyakamalamārtaṇḍa* pp. 606ff., *Tattvārthasūtra* 1.19.

⁹⁷ In the *Prameyakamalamārtaṇḍa*, *pratyakṣa* is understood as *viśada*, where *viśada* is glossed as *spaṣṭa*; v. 3, p. 589: *viśadaṃ pratyakṣam* | Comm.: *viśadaṃ spaṣṭam yad vijñānaṃ tat pratyakṣam* | See also Hemacandra’s *Pramāṇamīmāṃsā* 1.13: *viśadaḥ pratyakṣam* |

⁹⁸ *Prameyakamalamārtaṇḍa* pp. 591ff.; p. 592: *tanna vyāptijñānam apy aspaṣṭatvāt pratyakṣam yuktam* |

⁹⁹ SV to 3.7, p. 143.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 279: *tathāvidharasanāgocarō lokottaro ‘rtho rasa iti* |

¹⁰² Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 224). *Locana* p. 187: *pratītir eva viśiṣṭā rasanā* | *sā ca nātye laukikānūmānapratīter vilakṣaṇā, tāṃ ca pramukhe upāyatayā sandadhānā* |

See also Pollock’s translation (2016, p. 83) of Śāṅkuka who distinguishes the inference of *rasa* from regular types of inference; see Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 10) on Śāṅkuka’s rejection of regular types of knowledge.

Drama and the Lived World

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra state that the actors follow real-world behavior (*loka-vyavahāra*),¹⁰³ thereby recreating the world that we know as it really is. They further endorse this thesis by equating worldly and aesthetic emotions in their effects on people. In the benedictory verse, which we have examined above, the world or *viśva* is said to be held in the right path by means of the twelve canonical texts in the first reading of the verse and the twelve types of dramas in the alternative reading. In both readings, *viśva* in the singular must be understood in the sense of the whole (*samudāyāpekṣam ekatvam*) that comprises the human world and the story-world of drama.¹⁰⁴

The story-world largely illumines past events. How do we know these events actually took place? The sages saw the past events through their eyes of wisdom (*jñānadrś*), which never lie, and described them in detail, so actors can recreate the past exactly as it was in front of the audience.¹⁰⁵ Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra use the word *loka* throughout their text to refer to both the lived world and the story-world, reinforcing the sense that they are closely related. For instance, they note that some people, who are steeped in the terminology of the drama, even in real life, or *loka*, call effects (*kārya*), causes (*hetu*), and associate causes (*sahacārin*) by the technical terms of drama as physical reactions (*anubhāva*), factors (*vibhāva*), and transient emotions (*vyabhicārin*).¹⁰⁶ The savoring of *rasa* pertains to all connoisseurs, including the characters in the story-world, or *loka*, and the spectators or listeners of the literary work, or *kāvya*, and in each case the experience is similar, as it consists in the enhanced stable emotion in the form of a special mental state (*cittavṛttiviśeṣaś ca rasaḥ*).¹⁰⁷ Abhinavagupta maintains that the complete equation of *rasa* with the stable emotion is wrong¹⁰⁸ and would entail the existence of *rasa* in the lived world.¹⁰⁹ But for Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, the existence of *rasa* in the characters and the story-world presupposes the presence of *rasa* in the real world.

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra divide the foundational factors (*vibhāvas*) into *aparamārtha-sat* or “not really existing” and *paramārtha-sat* or “really existing.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ SV to 3.49, p. 167: *paramārthas tu lokavyavahāram evāyam anuvartate* | See Pollock’s (2016, pp. 184–185) and Gnoli’s (1968, pp. 33–41) translations of Bhaṭṭa Toṭa’s refutation of the notion of imitation, as restated by Abhinavagupta.

¹⁰⁴ SV to 1.1: *viśvam iti samudāyāpekṣam ekatvam | karmabhūmitvāt prādhānyavivakṣayā manuṣyaloko va viśvam* | “*viśvam* is in the singular in the sense of the whole, or in the sense of the human world as it is the most important by virtue of being the land of karma.”
viśvam iti pūrvavat samavakārādīnām devadaityacaritavyutpādakavāt | “*viśvam* should be understood in the same way [that is, in the sense of the whole], because the epic play and other types of dramas tell stories about gods and demons.”

¹⁰⁵ SV to 3.50ab.

¹⁰⁶ SV to 3.8.

¹⁰⁷ SV to 3.7, p. 143: *evam ca loke kāvye vā sarvarasikasādhārāno rasāsvādo, na punaḥ sarvathāpy ādhārānullekhī* |

¹⁰⁸ *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 278: *sthāyivilakṣaṇa eva rasaḥ* |

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*: *evam hi loke ‘pi kiṃ na rasaḥ?*

¹¹⁰ See Pollock (2016, pp. 233–234).

The former pertain to the actors, spectators, listeners, and readers, and the latter pertain to the characters. In other words, Sītā, as wife, is an existing (*paramārthasat*) foundational factor for Rāma but does not really exist as wife (*aparamārthasat*) for the spectator. The existing *vibhāvas* (*paramārthena santah*) serve as specific objects for the characters' rasas, while the *vibhāvas* that only appear to exist for the spectators serve as generalized objects (*sāmānyaviṣaya*) of their rasas. The same dichotomy appears to apply to real life experiences, as in a situation when a young man feels passion (*rati*) for a particular young woman who also feels passion for him. However, when the woman who is the object of the young man's passion is in love with someone else, the erotic rasa he experiences is for a woman in general. Similarly, one experiences the pitiful rasa of the generalized object upon seeing a woman crying over her husband (*bandhu*).¹¹¹ These illustrations apply to both drama and *loka* where *loka* should be taken as the story-world and the lived world.

Dhanañjaya-Dhanika's notions inform some of these tenets. First, the idea of the generalized object appears in the *Daśarūpaka*, where Dhanika explains that the word Sītā signifies a generalized woman, free from the particularities such as her being the daughter of King Janaka.¹¹² Moreover, when Dhanika speaks about *loka* or the story-world, he describes it as though it was the lived world with its own, distinct rasa.¹¹³

An actor does not experience rasa as a real-world rasa, because at that moment he does not perceive his own wife as the object of pleasure.¹¹⁴

Pollock (2016, p. 381, n. 229) notes that by the "real-world rasa," Dhanika understands the emotion that the character Rāma feels for his wife Sītā. In a similar vein, Dhanika observes that poetic sorrow is different from "real-world sorrow," implying the world of the characters.¹¹⁵

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra reuse Dhanañjaya-Dhanika's terminology and take their ideas further by equating the effects of aesthetic emotions with those of real-world emotions and suggesting that rasa exists outside of drama and poetry. The spectator can even become like the character in the drama and feel rasa towards a specific object (*pratiniyataviṣaya eva rasāsvādah*) through the recollection of a particular person from his or her own life (*niyataviṣayasmaranādīnā*).¹¹⁶ In other words, while watching Rāma's expression of love for Sītā, the audience members can recall their beloved and direct the erotic rasa evoked by the dramatic performance toward them. In this way, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra appear to erase the boundary between the lived world and drama with its story-world, which earlier theoreticians had been unswervingly constructing.

¹¹¹ SV to 3.7, p. 142.

¹¹² *Avaloka* to 4.41ab: *tatra sītāśabdāḥ parityaktajanakatanayādiviśeṣāḥ strīmātravācīnaḥ* | See also *Daśarūpaka* 4.40–4.41. See Pollock (2016, p. 399), n. 26.

¹¹³ *Avaloka* to 4.42ab: *laukikarasavilakṣaṇatvaṃ nāṭyarasānām*.

¹¹⁴ *Avaloka* to 4.42 cd: *nartako 'pi na laukikarasena rasavān bhavati | tadānīm bhogyatvena svamahilāder agrahaṇāt* |

¹¹⁵ *Avaloka* to 4.45ab: *anyaś ca laukikāt karuṇāt kāvyakarūṇaḥ* |

¹¹⁶ SV to 3.7, p. 143.

A similar notion appears later in Kumārasvāmin's commentary (c. 1430) on Vidyānātha's *Pratāparudrīya*.¹¹⁷ Kumārasvāmin first states that one can imagine Rāma and Sītā as one's own husband or wife and then proceeds to establish the fact that they are a man and woman and as such "real-world beings who are consecrated in the position of aesthetic element by way of literary representation or dramatic acting."¹¹⁸ He further adds that "Rama and Sita's desire and so on are real-world feelings" in the form of "supermundane stable emotions."¹¹⁹ In his *Rasakalikā*, the South Indian scholar Rudrabhaṭṭa (twelfth century) restates Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra's ideas about the possibility of using memory to intensify one's aesthetic experience. However, for Rudrabhaṭṭa memory does not generate rasa of the generalized object:

Some argue that words such as Mālatī remind one of a woman in general and words such as Rāvaṇa of an enemy in general. Therefore, when this non-specific woman is called to mind through memory, she becomes the foundational factor [of rasa] for the audience. This statement is not flawed by not perceiving the specific [nature of rasa's foundational factor], as one can see from [the way] memory [works]: even though I have seen Devadatta, I do not know what his complexion is like. And it is not the case that since pitiful, etc. rasas are unpleasurable, literary texts with such rasas as predominant should not be produced. Indeed, all rasas eventually take the form of pleasure in the audience members.¹²⁰

If Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra use the means of memory (*smaraṇa*) to suggest that rasa can have a specific object, Rudrabhaṭṭa points to the fickleness of memory that often retains only the general impression of a past experience, devoid of particularity. Contra Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra, Bhaṭṭanāyaka's tripartite structure of aesthetic experience also presupposes the transcendence of individual particularities through the process of generalization or universalization (*sādhāraṇīkarana*). Further, Abhinavagupta states that for the spectator as well as for the actor and character, in the experience of savoring rasa the self "is neither entirely obscured nor is it presented to consciousness in all its unique particularity."¹²¹ In fact, Abhinavagupta declares the awareness of aesthetic experiences as only one's own (*svaikatātānām*) to be a chief obstacle (*paramo vighnaḥ*) for aesthetic savoring

¹¹⁷ Pollock (2016, 239, 255).

¹¹⁸ Tr. by Pollock (2016, p. 258).

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ *Rasakalikā* pp. 101–102: *atra kecit samādhānam ahuḥ mālatyādiśabdā yoṣimnātrodbodhakāḥ | rāvaṇādiśabdāḥ śatrumātrasyeti | tena sāmānyena smṛtyāruḍho yoṣidādih sāmājīkānām ālambanatvaṃ bhajate | na ca viśeṣāpratipattidoṣaḥ | dr̥ṣṭo devadattaḥ kīdr̥gvarṇa iti na jñāyate iti smaraṇadarśanāt | na caivaṃ karuṇāder duḥkhātmakatayā tatpradhānānām prabandhānām anupādeyatvaṃ, sarvasyāpi rasasya sāmājikeṣv ānandarūpatayā paryavasānāt |*

¹²¹ Tr. by Granoff (2016, p. 283, n. 6). *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 273: *nātmānyantatiraskṛto na viśeṣata ullikhitāḥ | evaṃ paro 'pi |* Granoff disagrees with the translation of Pollock, who interprets the last phrase as referring to other spectators. She shows that Abhinavagupta further explicitly states that aesthetic experience is characterized by the absence of impediment, particularity, in perceiving oneself or the other (*paro 'pi*).

and pleasure.¹²² He also posits that the spectator who is preoccupied with his or her own pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions would not be able to focus on anything else.¹²³ One's cognitive state must eschew individuality and forget about the self.

Nowhere do Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra indicate that *rasa* belongs only to drama or poetry; rather, they, either overtly or implicitly, state that regular men and women undergo the same processes as actors on the stage. The wide presence of *rasa* including in the actor, character, and even dreamer, and its real effects on the audience members are important, as we have seen earlier, for Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra in that they render the aesthetic emotion as identical to worldly emotion. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra compare real persons such as a prostitute and a singer who entertain others with actors in a drama. Just as the prostitute, who expresses a passion for money, may sometimes feel an intense passion (*parāṃ ratim*), and just as a singer, who delights others, may also be greatly delighted, so the actor performing an emotion can occasionally become absorbed in it (*tanmayībhāvam upayāty evā*).¹²⁴

The authors of the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* do not envision the experience of *rasa* as an impersonal consciousness absorbed into relishing itself. Rather, they demystify aesthetic experience by drawing parallels between the lived world and drama and establishing affinities between them. They paint an ambiguous picture, in which the imitation of the story-world of drama (where the story-world is true based on the sages' accounts) and the lived world become indistinguishable in terms of the audience's experience.¹²⁵

Conclusion

I have shown that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra suggest that drama is an imitation of reality, and therefore, should evoke life-like unpleasurable and pleasurable emotions. Through music and skillful acting, the spectator begins to believe that the actors are actually the characters they are playing. This process is essential for the spectator's absorption in the states of Rāma and the other characters. However, this type of absorption is different from the one described by Abhinavagupta: it does not presuppose a complete dissolution of the ego in the relishing of the highest bliss that is the pure consciousness itself. Rather, as we have seen earlier, the spectator remains cognitively active and his or her deep empathetic response to the character's pain and happiness can be personalized through the mechanism of memory, whereby the spectator's experience of *rasa* has a specific object taken from the lived world. In other words, the spectators (like the characters) can experience

¹²² *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 274.

¹²³ *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 275: *tathā nijasukhaduḥkhādivivaśībhūtas ca katham vastvantare samvidam viśramayed iti* | Pollock (2016, p. 399, n. 30) identifies this as “the third hindrance” for aesthetic pleasure and suggests that for Abhinavagupta, “the intrusion of the viewer's real life would seem to fall under his third ‘hindrance.’”

¹²⁴ SV to 3.7, p. 142.

¹²⁵ For a recent study on the blurring of boundaries between drama and life in Bhavabhūti's plays, see Tubb (2014, p. 410ff).

rasa in relation to a particular object that is *paramārtha-sat* (“really existing”) for them, such as their beloved, as well as to the generalized man or woman through foundational factors such as Rāma or Sītā, who are not their real beloved and thus remain *aparamārtha-sat* (“not really existing”) for them. The entanglement between the experience of the story-world of drama and the lived world in this understanding may produce an even more powerful effect on the audience.

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra envision aesthetic experience as progressing from a form of deception and cognitive error to the feeling of pleasure, followed by yet another cognitive error of misattribution. The feeling of intense pleasure occurs upon the spectator’s realization of the fact that he or she has been beguiled by the actors into thinking that the dramatic illusion is in fact reality. This delightful insight (*camatkāra*) is coexistent with the feeling of the highest bliss (*paramānanda*) that the spectator then misattributes to the rasas. In other words, pleasure ensues from seeing through the deception and from uncovering the complex interactions between illusion and reality. Through drama, the spectator thus realizes that experience is deeply entwined with error. This structure of aesthetic experience suggests that drama may become a vehicle to induce the state of disillusionment with worldly experience on a more general level. The insight, which presumes the dissolution of illusion through the recognition of the skill of the actors to depict reality, may in turn lead the spectator to acquire even greater joy produced by seeing through worldly illusions and to learn the truth about the world itself. As Doniger (2009, p. 517) states: “When you realize that the snake is not a snake but a rope, you go on to realize that there is not even a rope at all.”

The notion that aesthetic experience is contingent upon the cognitive error reappears in a discussion of “new” views in the seventeenth century theoretician Jagannātha’s *Rasagaṅgādhara*. As Tubb and Bronner (2008, p. 625) have pointed out, one such view locates the aesthetic experience in “a temporary identification with a fictive character,” which occurs through “a form of a cognitive defect (*doṣa*).” This conceptualization, as they further add, upends Abhinavagupta’s interpretation:

For Abhinavagupta the rasa experience results from the removal of a veil (*bhagnāvaraṇa cit*); in the “new” view, it results from the imposition of a veil (*avacchādite svātmani*).¹²⁶

This view resonates with Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s idea that a form of deception of the audience by actors and poets is at the heart of aesthetic experience. Jagannātha explains that in the course of watching the drama, the spectator’s self becomes “veiled by the illusion of being Dushyanta,”¹²⁷ and then proceeds to discuss objections that can be posed to the notion that aesthetic experience is solely pleasurable. One of them suggests that even if the experience is based on a cognitive error, that does not prevent it from generating real emotions and effects, just as in the case of the illusion of a rope taken for a snake that can cause fear and

¹²⁶ Tubb and Bronner (2008, p. 625).

¹²⁷ Tr. by Pollock (2016, p. 320).

trembling.¹²⁸ We have seen that it is the argument of Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra that an illusion or error (*bhrānti*) can generate real, material effects, illustrated by the dreaming person who shows physical reactions (*anubhāvas*) that are the primary consequences of *rasa*. The latter view—that the dreaming person can also experience *rasa*—is further refuted by Jagannātha, who states that it cannot be *rasa* because “it is not produced by reflection on the subject matter of the literary work.”¹²⁹ In his encyclopedic treatment of the “new” views, Jagannātha engages with some of the important ideas propounded in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*: erroneous cognition as the source of aesthetic experience, unpleasurable *rasas*, and the possibility of producing *rasa* in a dream or illusion. This indicates that the views which Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra entertained had spread widely enough to be reckoned with five centuries later amid the other theories discussed in the *Rasaṅgādhara*.

Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s theory of aesthetics can suggest two conclusions. First, experiences in both the lived world and the fictive world of drama are contingent upon erroneous cognition, which indicates that it is only on the path of monasticism that one can attain freedom from deluding karma. Second, through excitement and pleasure, just as through didactic discourse and religious sermons, the audience members can be led to detachment and freedom from this world in all its manifestations. We have seen the significance that Rāmacandra assigns to freedom or independence by lauding it as the supreme value and wishing his audience “to be independent” and “to enjoy independence” in the final verses of his plays. Kulkarni (1983c, p. 105) surmises that the playwright implies by independence a freedom from karma and rebirth. While Rāmacandra does not offer this meaning explicitly in his plays, the way in which he and Guṇacandra imagine aesthetic experience reaffirms Kulkarni’s intuition.

The *Nāṭyadarpaṇa*, as a textbook for novice authors, as well as Rāmacandra’s eleven dramas might have facilitated the sudden explosion of playwriting among Śvetāmbara Jain monks in the twelfth century. The new conceptualization of the aesthetic experience complicated it in ways that were amenable to Jain sensibilities. First, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employed the principle of pluralism (*anekāntavāda*) to increase the possible loci of *rasa*, and in his *Mallikāmakaranda-prakarāṇa*, Rāmacandra vindicated the fact that Jain mendicant authors could feel various *rasas* beyond that of peacefulness. Moreover, the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* uncoupled the experience of *rasa* from that of pure pleasure and presented a more complex relationship between *rasa* and pleasure, one that is mediated by a cognitive error. Finally, the affinity between the world of drama and the lived world along with its potential consequence of disillusionment might have rendered the vocation of playwriting a more meaningful activity. In light of these considerations, we may, for once, trace the source of innovation, which pertains to the development of the dramatic genre in Jain monks’ literature, to the disciples of Hemacandra, rather than Hemacandra himself.

¹²⁸ *Rasaṅgādhara* p. 44: *rajjusarpāder bhayakampādyanutpādakatāpatteḥ |*

¹²⁹ Tr. by Pollock (2016, p. 322). *Rasaṅgādhara* p. 46: *svāpnādis tu tādrśabodho na kāvyārthacintanajameti na rasah |*

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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